

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1172

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 199

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF JUNE 6-7 CRISIS IN AZORES

1. AZORES WON A VICTORY ON JUNE 6 AND 7. MILITARY GOVERNOR HAS COMMITTED LISBON TO SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO ECONOMIC PROBLEM WHICH GENERATED MUCH OF SUPPORT FOR MAPA RPT MAPA AND SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS. PEOPLE OF SAO MIGUEL FORCED RESIGNATION OF UNPOPULAR CIVIL GOVERNOR OF PONTA DELGADA DISTRICT. POPULATION HAS DISCOVERED THEY HAVE POWER AND HAS ACHIEVED RESULTS WITH IT. IN ADDITION, SEPARATIST LEADERS, JOSE FRANCO, JOAO GAGODE CAMARA, LUIS INDIO, AND ABEL CARREIRO, GAINED LEGITIMACY AS RESULT THEIR SUCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS WITH MILITARY GOVERNOR.

2. CRISIS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED FRAGILITY OF LISBON'S CONTROL. WE BELIEVE IT WAS ONLY GOOD JUDGEMENT AND NEGOTIATING ABILITY OF MILITARY GOVERNOR, GENERAL MAGALHAES, THAT PERMITTED RAPID AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF CRISIS. GENERAL MAGALHAES', A CONTINENTAL, HQS QUICKLY GAINED TRUST AND RESPECT OF LOCALS SINCE HE ARRIVED HERE FOUR MONTHS AGO. DURING CRISIS HE AVOIDED ANY CONFRONTATION AND RELIED ON TWO KEY AZOREAN ARMY OFFICERS KNOWN TO HAVE CONFIDENCE OF PEOPLE: LTC RPT LTC MIRANDA AND MAJOR MONIZ. WE SUSPECT MIRANDA ABLE TO USE HIS TROOPS, WHO ARE AZOREAN, ONLY BECAUSE HE HAS THEIR PERSONAL LOYALTY. HE USED SOLDIERS ONLY AS GUARDS,
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NEVER FOR CROWD CONTROL. WHEN CROWD HAD TO BE DISPERSED, MIRANDA

AND MONIZ PERSONALLY WADED INTO THRONG AND SENT DEMONSTRATORS ON THEIR WAY. WE THINK MAGALHAES, MIRANDA, AND MONIZ GAINED CONTROL OF SITUATION AND MAINTAINED ORDER THROUGH SHEER LEADERSHIP.

3. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF SEPARATIST MOVEMENT ARE CLEAR. IT ENJOYS LATENT SUPPORT OF ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES ON SAO MIGUEL, BUT HAS NO EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP OR DIRECTION. SUCCESS FELL IN THEIR LAPS. THERE WAS NO COORDINATION WITH OTHER ISLANDS. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE DECLARATIONS FROM HORTA AND ANGRA AS REPRESENTING VIEWS OF OTHER ISLANDERS, WE NOT SURE OF DEGREE SUPPORT SEPARATIST MOVEMENT HAS HAD OR HAS THERE.

4. UNLESS LISBON PROVOKES IT, IN OUR VIEW SEPARATIST MOVEMENT WILL BE DORMANT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. ALTHOUGH MOST PEOPLE HERE DO NOT EXPECT ANY RESULTS, THEY SEEM WILLING GIVE LISBON PERIOD OF GRACE TO ACT ON THEIR COMPLAINTS LISTED MILITARY GOVERNORS STATEMENT LAST NIGHT. HOWEVER, SEPARATIST MOVEMENT WILL BECOME ACTIVE AGAIN IF NO PROGRESS MADE ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY ON MILK PRICE ISSUE, OR IF LISBON MAKES UNPOPULAR POLITICAL DECISION SUCH AS NAMING LEFTIST CIVIL GOVERNOR FOR PONTA DELGADA. WE HAVE NOT TALKED TO ANYONE HERE WHO THINKS SEPARATISM IS DEAD.

5. NOBODY OF OPINION OTHER THAN EXTREME LEFT, HAS ALLEGED THAT USG RPT USG, CIA RPT CIA, NATO RPT NATO OR ANY OTHER OUTSIDE FORCE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH EVENTS JUNE 6 AND 7.

6. FINALLY, WE SEE NO DRIVE FOR INDEPENDENCE SAKE DEVELOPING HERE. MOST AZOREANS WOULD BE WILLING REMAIN PORTUGUESE AND COULD TOLERATE MOST ANY TYPE OF GOVERNMENT IN LISBON, PROVIDED THEIR ECONOMIC INTERESTS NOT DAMAGED AND THAT LOCAL OFFICIALS WERE AZOREAN AND REPRESENTATIVE OF POLITICAL VIEWS OF ISLANDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE LESS LISBON REFLECTS ARCHIPELAGO POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND THE MORE ECONOMIC INTERESTS SUFFER AS RESULT, THE GREATER THE DEGREE OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AUTONOMY NEEDED TO KEEP PORTUGUESE FLAG FLYING IN AZORES.
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